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FROM : AMEMBASSY, GUATEMALA DATE: March 22, 1963

SUBJECT : WEEKA NO. 12

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REVIEWED BY DATE DEC 1997
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POLITICAL

1. The Imminent Return Of Arévalo And The Political Scene

Arevalista propagandists continued to claim both publicly and privately that the ex-President would return to Guatemala the 31st of this month. By the time President Ydígoras went to Costa Rica March 17, pressure on him seemed to have eased considerably and the possibility of an imminent coup seemed to have diminished. Students ceased demonstrating and Ydígoras' most recent actions and statements with regard to Arévalo seemed to have reduced the military's misgivings about continued support for the GOG. An air of uncertainty remained high, however, as bombs were set off on successive nights in various parts of the city, the chief of the Judicial Police announced the discovery of a "vast communist conspiracy", and Guatemalan military authorities told the US military officers confidentially that one-time guerilla leader Lt. Marco Antonio YON Sosa was active with some 50 men in the Zacapa area. (Embtels 567 and 571) The Minister of Defense subsequently publicly denied rumors to this effect.

In addition the anti-Communist, anti-Arévalo demonstration planned for March 23 is being strongly backed by Alejos and GOG forces, acting logically to demonstrate their "good faith" re Arévalo. However, practically all of the opposition groups and parties except the MLN and the MDN have backed out. Besides the Redención and Alejos, supporting groups include Cruz Salazar's MDN, the MLN and the UNI. Demonstrators hope for 40,000 -- mostly campesinos -- but 10 to 20 thousand seem more likely. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Comment: [redacted] Some observers believe the Government may impose a State of Siege, suspending guarantees and giving the Government power to keep or kick Arévalo out, even in the face of a possible Supreme Court injunction which, in normal circumstances, would legally require the GOG to permit Arévalo to come in and protect him. The bombs, the report of guerilla activity, etc., could be aimed at setting the stage for a State of Siege. It is noteworthy that the AEU (University Students' Association), which often follows the Communist line and which heretofore has strongly advocated the replacement of the Ydígoras Government, issued a "special bulletin" March 20 arguing against a coup d'etat. Such "dark clouds", it noted, could wreck the chances of the succession to power of a "democratic" (read Arévalo) Government.

Arévalo, (who of course still might possibly give up and not return), may well be spirited into Guatemala in advance and produced in appropriate circumstances on the 31st in order to avoid unfriendly welcomers. If that happens, the likelihood of getting him out of the country without considerable turmoil is dim. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Enclosure

CONFIDENTIAL

Inclosure

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

CONFIDENTIAL

John O. Bell

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